

UNCLASSIFIED

6/5/79

AK 157

R

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Human Rights, Army Politics

PARTICIPANTS: Human Rights Advocate, Raul Kraiselbrud, publisher
of the La Plata Daily, El Dia; his associate
Carlos Alberto Fascetto; PAO Robert Cross and IO John Corr

DATE: June 5, 1979

PLACE: A restaurant in La Plata

Kraiselbrud said:

The local human rights situation has greatly improved over the past six months. One sign of this improvement is the reappearance of common criminals, who laid low in the past out of fear of the security forces. When these criminals are arrested, they are treated well and enjoy their legal rights, a situation which goes against the long-standing practice of the Argentine police, which as far back as anyone can remember has had the tendency at times to disregard the human rights of prisoners. Conditions at the Magdalena military prison are good; prisoners even have private bathrooms. Conditions in jails for common criminals leave much to be desired -- another longstanding Argentine tradition.

Viola has effectively eliminated Suarez Mason by giving him a desk in place of command of troops, a situation other Viola enemies in the Army find themselves in.

El Dia's relations with Governor St. Jean appear to be improving. The provincial government has resumed in a limited way its advertising in El Dia and has not tried to suppress criticism of its policies as reflected by comment and articles in the newspaper.

The Government news Agency Telam has an agreement to exchange information with the Yugoslavian news agency Tanjug.

U.S. cultural influence in Argentina is rising as opposed to the traditional Argentine bias towards Europe.

The Catholic Church in Argentina has much power, some of it, not visible. For example, the Church has economic interests in the traditional economic sectors, especially interests with an Italian orientation. It also enjoys the use of Government facilities, e.g., printing presses, when needed. The Church is basically conservative, but is generally willing to adapt, if necessary, to whoever has has power.

IO:JMC:bjj

Clearance: PAO:RCross
A/DCM:JAmott

UNCLASSIFIED

cc: AMB DCM POL DAO POL/R ARA/ECA USICA/AR INR/OIL INR/RAR
HA/HR - P. Flood ECOM

820103

B04 17404